

PIDGIN ENGLISH IN NAURU

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This article reports on a preliminary study of an English-lexifier Pidgin spoken on the tiny Pacific island of Nauru. This pidgin has distinctive features of both Chinese Pidgin English and Pacific Pidgin English, as well as many unique characteristics. Socio-historical information shows that these two forms of Pidgin English have come into contact in Nauru and the data suggests that pidgin mixing, a form of koineization, has occurred. The linguistic consequences of such a mixture are similar to those of the mixing of other linguistic subsystems such as regional dialects. The data also supports observations about the problems of genetic classification and the significance of mixing in tracing the development of pidgins in the Pacific and other areas.

1. *Introduction*

A previously unstudied form of Pidgin English (PE) is currently spoken in the Republic of Nauru, a single island of 24 square kilometers lying just south of the equator, midway between Honolulu and Sydney. (Its nearest neighbor is Ocean Island, about 300 kilometers to the east.) Large phosphate deposits have made Nauru the wealthiest country in the region. The estimated population of Nauru in 1982 consisted of 4990 Nauruans and 3400 temporary residents, most of whom work in the phosphate industry or for the government (Carter 1984). The majority of the temporary residents are either from China or from other Pacific islands, mainly Kiribati and Tuvalu (formerly the Gilbert and Ellice Islands), and also Fiji and the Solomon Islands. In addition, there are significant numbers of people from Australia, New Zealand, Britain, the Philippines, and India.

This Pidgin English is used daily in Nauru in commercial contexts,

mostly in Chinese-run (but Nauruan-owned) trade stores and restaurants. The Chinese call it *ham soi* (or *ham shui wa*) 'seawater language' in Cantonese, the first language of the majority, and use it to communicate with non-Chinese in these contexts. Others living on the island call it "Pidgin Chinese (English)" and know and use it in varying degrees. Some simply speak to the Chinese in standard English, the main lingua franca among the other ethnic groups living in Nauru today, but it is rare to hear the Chinese reply in anything but pidgin. There are indications, however, that pidginized varieties were more widely spoken in the past, starting early in this century when laborers from China and from several Pacific island groups were brought to Nauru and Ocean Island to work in the phosphate mines.¹

When I first heard the Pidgin English spoken in Nauru, I was struck by the fact that it has many distinctive features of Chinese Pidgin English (Chinese PE), spoken since the first half of the eighteenth century in Hong Kong and Macao and on the south coast of China in Guangzhou (Canton) and other treaty ports, but not to any extent in the Pacific islands. Chinese PE is now reportedly dying out in China and Hong Kong, and is said by some to be already extinct (Franklin 1979:41). At the same time, the Nauru Pidgin also has many distinctive features of varieties of Pacific Pidgin English (Pacific PE), spoken since the first half of the nineteenth century in areas involved in the sandalwood, *bêche-de-mer*, and Pacific labor trades, namely Queensland and most of the tropical islands in the Pacific Ocean.² Current varieties of Pacific PE, grouped together as Melanesian Pidgin English, are Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea), Bislama (Vanuatu), and Pijin (Solomon Islands).

Since Chinese PE and Pacific PE are pidgins and share the same lexifier language, they have many lexical and grammatical features in common. It is also well known that these two varieties were in contact in the past, especially during the early nineteenth century when sandalwood and *bêche-de-mer* from the Pacific were carried to China. In fact, several scholars, such as Wurm (1971) and Hancock (1971), have suggested that Chinese PE may be the original source for Pacific PE. This suggestion is investigated in two important articles by Clark (1979) and Baker (1987), in which they compare features of Chinese PE, Pacific PE, and other English-lexifier Pidgins. Clark (1979:45–6) concludes that Chinese PE was only one of many sources for Pacific PE, while Baker (1987:197) demonstrates that the direct influence of Chinese PE on Pacific PE has probably been very limited. At any rate, each variety has certain exclusive features.

The presence of some of the exclusive features of both Chinese PE and Pacific PE together in the PE of Nauru first led me to investigate the possibility that it is a mixed variety. This article reports on the results of the preliminary investigation. First, it presents some socio-historical background information on Nauru and some documentary evidence that the two varieties of PE came into contact there. Then, it describes the salient linguistic features of PE in Nauru in comparison to those of both Chinese PE and Pacific PE. A discussion of mixing of pidgin languages follows, and finally some questions and conclusions.

2. *Background*

Nauru was sighted by Europeans in 1798, but there was little contact with outsiders until the 1830s, when whaling ships started stopping for food and water. In 1841 there were 21 "beachcombers" living on Nauru (Maude 1968:145). The island came under German administration in 1888, and the first missionaries arrived the following year. After World War I, Nauru was administered jointly by Australia, New Zealand, and Great Britain, until the Japanese occupied the island in 1940. Following World War II, the island was placed under United Nations Trusteeship, and administered by Australia. Nauru gained its independence in 1968.

The phosphate industry began in Nauru in 1906 (see Williams & Macdonald 1985), and the next year laborers were imported from China and other Pacific islands. By 1914, there were 500 Chinese working on the island (Williams & Macdonald 1985:104), and by 1933 the highest number of 1533 had been reached (Viviani 1970:181). The Chinese laborers, all men, came mainly from the southern coastal provinces of mainland China. They were recruited and shipped out by a professional agency (Decker 1940:62), but later much of the recruiting was done by laborers who returned to their villages when their contracts expired. The new recruits were brought to Hong Kong where they were kept in special boarding houses owned by the agency until they were transported to Nauru. The contracts were for three years and Chinese were not allowed to become permanent settlers, but they could renew their contracts, as approximately half did each year, and there was no limit to the number of renewals (Decker 1940:80). (Basically the same system exists today.)

The first imported Pacific Islands laborers were from the Caroline and Marshall Islands. In 1914, there were 530 of them working on Nauru (Wil-

liams & Macdonald 1985:196). In 1920, laborers were recruited for the first time in New Guinea, with 41 engaged in Rabaul. Recruiting took place the next year in Manus, Madang, and the Sepik area, and 10 men from Morobe and 60 from Aitape went to Nauru (Williams & Macdonald 1985:162, 166). In 1922, there were 141 men from New Guinea working in Nauru, but the death rate among them was high and those that survived were repatriated in 1924 (Decker 1940:60). The number of other Pacific Islanders was also reduced, and reached a low of 4 in 1932. The number was kept small until the 1950s when the importation of laborers from Kiribati and Tuvalu started. By 1966, there were 1532 other Pacific Islanders in Nauru. Population figures (including Chinese laborers) from 1921 to 1966 are given in Table 1 (from Viviani 1970:181).

Social interaction between Chinese and non-Chinese was extremely limited by several ordinances unofficially aimed at keeping Chinese men away from Nauruan women. The Chinese laborers had to be in their compounds from 9 pm to 5 am, and Nauruans needed a pass to get into the compound (Decker 1940:82). But the two groups did have some contacts, as pointed out by Ellis (1935:254):

Both Nauruans and the Banabans [on Ocean Island] trade regularly with the Chinese, selling them pigs, fish, fruit and vegetables . . . Apart from sport contests and small trading operations, the races do not mix freely in their ordinary life.

This kind of social environment seems ideal for the use of a pidgin language — speakers of different languages in limited contact, needing to communicate in certain contexts, such as trading. In other parts of the southwestern Pacific, Chinese settled as merchants or tradesmen, not as indentured laborers. Thus, mixing with the indigenous population was not as restricted, and Chinese immigrants were able to learn either the local language or pidgin versions of it, as, for example, in Fiji (Siegel 1982). Also, in other Pacific countries, Chinese immigrants did not make up such a large proportion of the population. Finally, since the Chinese in Nauru were at first laborers in the phosphate industry, they had to communicate to some extent with other laborers from Pacific islands and with their bosses, Germans before World War I and thereafter mainly Australians and New Zealanders.

The common means of communication known by members of these different groups was some variety of PE. Nearly all the Chinese were from the southern coast of mainland China, and they had all spent time in Hong

Table 1. *Population of Nauru 1921–1966*

Year ^a	Chinese	Europeans	Other Pacific islanders	Total immi- grants	Nauruans	Total population
1921	597	119	266	982	1,084	2,066
1922	514	110	265	889	1,113	2,129
1923	486	139	140	765	1,164	2,067
1924	684	114	31	829	1,189	2,120
1925	814	118	22	954	1,220	2,174
1926	822	117	27	966	1,251	2,217
1927	761	115	21	1,897	1,266	2,163
1928	1,051	131	20	1,202	1,277	2,479
1929	1,099	134	16	1,249	1,365	2,614
1930	1,110	147	16	1,273	1,411	2,684
1931	1,105	147	14	1,266	1,426	2,692
1932	696	141	4	841	1,475	2,316
1933	936	165	13	1,114	1,527	2,641
1934	933	163	14	1,110	1,567	2,677
1935	931	158	4	1,093	1,603	2,696
1936	1,092	179	4	1,275	1,647	2,922
1937	1,261	194	4	1,459	1,638	3,097
1938	1,533	179	27	1,739	1,661	3,400
1939	1,512	171	44	1,727	1,733	3,460
1940	1,350	192	49	1,591	1,761	3,352
1942	194	7	193	394	1,848	2,242
1945	n.a.	n.a.	17	n.a.	589	n.a.
1946	778	79	21	878	1,369	2,247
1947	1,163	192	31	1,386	1,379	2,765
1948	1,370	247	97	1,714	1,448	3,162
1949	1,440	247	58	1,745	1,524	3,269
1950	1,491	278	81	1,850	1,582	3,432
1951	1,411	274	131	1,816	1,618	3,434
1952	759	253	560	1,572	1,672	3,244
1953	515	270	874	1,659	1,745	3,404
1954	552	291	846	1,689	1,828	3,517
1955	568	262	911	1,741	1,935	3,676
1956	696	286	935	1,917	1,976	3,893
1957	732	373	1,105	2,210	2,093	4,303
1958	654	363	1,133	2,150	2,158	4,308
1959	712	382	974	2,068	2,196	4,264
1960	715	380	1,052	2,147	2,328	4,475
1961	712	324	1,094	2,130	2,409	4,539
1962	748	412	1,173	2,333	2,516	4,849
1963	697	496	1,077	2,243	2,558	4,801
1964	835	395	1,023	2,253	2,661	4,914
1965	900	446	1,481	2,827	2,734	5,561
1966	1,167	428	1,532	3,127	2,921	6,048

Source: Territory of Nauru, *Reports*.

^a At 31 Dec. to 1940, then 30 June.

Kong. These are the two areas where Chinese PE was most widely spoken. Evidence that Chinese PE was spoken by Chinese in Nauru in the past comes from Ellis (1935). First, he quotes a Chinese caretaker as saying, "No savvy" (236). He also attributes to the Chinese the creation of the term *Topside*, referring to the upper phosphate workings (240). In Chinese PE, *side* is a locative suffix and the word [tápsaid] means 'at the top, above' (Hall 1966:57). Furthermore, in describing the day of Nauru's liberation from Japanese occupation in 1945, Ellis (1946:139) mentions a Chinese mechanic trying to tell about his experiences under the Japanese in an "incoherent stream of pidgin English."

As for the Pacific Islanders, the laborers from New Guinea almost certainly knew a form of Pacific Pidgin English, and it is also likely that many from other areas also knew some other closely related variety of Pacific PE from their experience in the labor trade. In the last third of the nineteenth century, thousands of people from Kiribati worked as indentured laborers in Queensland and Samoa, where forms of Pacific PE were spoken as plantation languages. Evidence that Pacific PE was spoken by islanders outside Melanesia is found in the quotations given in books written by visitors to the following islands: Kiribati (Jones 1861:104, 115; Stevenson 1900:281), Tuvalu (David 1899:53, 115, 173, 216, 225), and Kosrae (Caroline Islands) (Jones 1861:130, 133, 139, 196).

More importantly, Ellis (1935) gives more recent quotations containing examples of Pacific PE spoken by a Banaban and by Nauruans. The first is on Ocean Island (64-5):

One of their number who had somehow acquired a knowledge of pidgin-English then turned to me and said:

(1) "You got gun?"

An answer in the affirmative was given rather shamefacedly...

(2) "You bring him out, all man like see him shoot, plenty no been see gun before."

The next example is a telegraph message reported to have been sent by the Nauruan servant of the European telegraph officer when his boss was out:

(3) "Master he go catch 'em kai-kai (dinner). You try again half hour."

In the final example (257), a Nauruan friend of Ellis, Dekaroa, talks about having committed murder in the past:

(4) "Me too much shame belong that time . . . me no savvy good do like that."

Ellis continues, "And then partly in Gilbertese and partly in pidgin-English he told of having come under the influence of the mission and of seeing the error of his ways."

Evidence that Europeans on Nauru also spoke PE again comes from Ellis (1935:162-3):

Generally speaking, pidgin-English is a most useful language and is adopted by various nationalities throughout the Pacific as the means of communication with the kanakas. On Nauru, for instance, the Germans used it continually with their native servants.

He also relates (258-9) the apocryphal story of someone speaking PE to an educated "native" (in this case, a European woman speaking to a Gilbertese) and being surprised at receiving a reply in standard English: "She was somewhat taken aback by his replying with perfect pronunciation, 'I quite understand, madam.'"

3. *Features of Pidgin English in Nauru*

This section contains a description of the salient lexical and grammatical features of the PE spoken in Nauru compared to those of Chinese PE and Pacific PE. The data on the Nauru Pidgin comes from five unstructured interviews with different Chinese speakers, all tape recorded and lasting a total of approximately three and a half hours. The recordings were made in early 1987 by Dr. France Mugler, a linguist at the University of the South Pacific, and a field assistant, a Chinese resident of Nauru.³ The field assistant, her husband (from Kiribati), and several other residents of Nauru provided additional information. Data on Chinese PE comes from Hall (1944), Franklin (1979), and Baker (1987), and on Pacific PE from Clark (1979) and my own knowledge. Following Clark (1979), Harris (1986), and Baker (1987), the features of each variety are identified using the English etyma or the spelling commonly found in the literature. Examples from Nauru in broad phonetic transcription are also given.⁴

3.1. Distinctive Chinese PE features

The following features found in Nauru are characteristic of Chinese PE but not of Pacific PE:

- a. the numeral classifier *piecee*:
- (5) déə adɨŋ tɬí písi otél
 there perhaps three NUM hotel
 'There are maybe three hotels there.'

- b. only three pronouns: first, second, and third person singular (in Nauru these are [mi], [yu], and [hɪm]).⁵
- c. possession shown by juxtaposing possessor and the entity possessed:
 - (6) mɪ hásɪbən pápa pápa
'my husband's father's father'
 - (7) yú háos fíji bígfəla
'Is your house in Fiji big?'
 - (8) hím sábe čáunis ítu hím máni
'He thinks the Chinese are using up his money.'
- d. *can do* meaning 'can (do it)' or 'it's possible':
 - (9) plándi kændú é
'If you've got a lot (of money), it's possible, eh?'
- e. the nominalizer -[ɪŋ] (Hall 1944:98):
 - (10) nó plánti tókɪŋ
'not too much talking'
- f. final vowels added onto some words of English origin, optionally in some cases, most often [i], but also [o] and [u]; for example:⁶
 - (11) háos(i) 'house'
 - tumšč(i) 'very (much)'
 - méɪk(i) 'make'
 - fíntš(i) 'finish'
 - láuki 'like, want'
 - ólo 'old'
 - gél(o) 'girl'
 - wátɪ(u) 'wife'
 - bífu 'beef'
- g. certain lexical items:
 - look see* 'see'
 - amah* 'nursemaid, servant'
 - coolie* 'laborer'

3.2. Distinctive Pacific PE features

The following features are characteristic of Pacific PE but not of Chinese PE:

a. *fellow* as a suffix to adjectives:

- (12) a. hím yáw bígfəla sɪdóa
 ‘He has a big store.’
 b. ɔlgíta gódfəla
 ‘All of them are good.’

b. *all together* as a quantifier, ‘all’, preceding nouns:

- (13) ɔlgíta nálu máen mó sílu
 ‘All the Nauruans don’t have any money.’

c. use of *something* for both ‘thing’ and ‘approximately’ (postposed to a quantity):

- (14) ɔlgíta səmsu nálu nó kæn
 ‘You can’t get all these things in Nauru.’

- (15) wən mún wən hændəŋ səmsu
 ‘about a hundred (dollars) a month’

d. use of *all right* as a transition device in discourse:

- (16) gó hɔŋkəŋ wən yía ɔlát kəm bæk
 ‘Go to Hong Kong, stay a year, OK, come back.’

e. *ating* (*I think*) meaning ‘perhaps’ or ‘it might be’:

- (17) adɪŋ fíji wən dála səmsəm hɔŋkəŋ mənɪ ét dála
 ‘One Fiji dollar might be worth eight Hong Kong dollars.’

f. total reduplication, as in [tɔktɔk] ‘talk’, [tɪŋtɪŋ] ‘think’, and [wásɪwásɪ] ‘wash’.

g. certain lexical items:

<i>salt water</i>	‘sea, ocean’
<i>kaikai</i>	‘food’
<i>calaboose</i> ⁷	‘jail’
<i>shilling</i>	‘money’
<i>no matter</i>	‘it doesn’t matter’

3.3. Shared features

Clark (1979:8–11) lists 30 features of the grammar and lexicon of Pacific PE and other English-based Pidgins which are “all innovations relative to standard English.” Similarly, Baker (1987:175) lists 34 features of Chinese PE. Certain innovations which are likely to be the result of universal processes of simplification are included in Baker’s list but not in Clark’s,

for example, preverbal *no* as negative marker and \emptyset copula. There are also some features on Baker's list which, he notes, were "never fully integrated in CPE," such as the *-m* transitive marker, *all* used as a plural marker, *got* as 'there is' in subjectless existential sentences, and *along* as a preposition. Also, one feature listed by both writers, *pickaninny*, is used as an adjective 'small' in Chinese PE but as a noun 'child' in Pacific PE.⁸

If we leave out *pickaninny* and the unintegrated Chinese PE features, there are 10 features which are common to both lists. To these I have added 10 other features distinct from standard English and common to Chinese PE and Pacific PE, but not listed by either Clark or Baker. Out of these 20 features, 17 occur in 2 or more of the 5 recordings of the PE of Nauru, and 3 do not occur where expected. Here are the 17 features which do occur, with examples:

- a. *all same*: preposition, 'like, so, the same as'

(18) *nó ɔlsém nálu*
'It's not like Nauru.'

- b. *catch*: verb, 'get, obtain'

(19) *mí hásubən lɔŋčəum gó kísi físi*
'My husband often goes fishing.'

- c. *got*: verb, 'have'⁹

(20) *nó gát də móni*
'(I) don't have the money (to go to Australia).'

- d. *how much*: interrogative pronoun, 'how much, how many'

(21) *yú gó háməči déi kóm báek*
'When you go, how many days till you come back?'

- e. *long time*: adverb, 'for a long time, frequently'

(22) *mí lɔŋčəum sítáp čáina*
'I stayed in China for a long time.'
(see also example 19)

- f. *master*: noun, 'boss'

(23) *másita plándi gód*
'(My) boss is very good.'

- g. *moon*: noun, 'month'

- (24) mí wók hía dlí hándəŋ élti wán mún
'I work here for 380 (dollars) a month.'
- h. *no can*: preverbal potential marker (negative)¹⁰
- (25) mí hástəbən nokæn gó hɔŋkəŋ
'My husband can't go to Hong Kong.'
- i. *no good*: adjective, 'bad'
- (26) gód ʒób, nóɡod ʒób, čáunis ɔlsém
'A good job or a bad job are just the same for the Chinese.'
- j. *number one*: adjective, 'very good, best'
- (27) yú nəmbawán wók e
'You have a very good job, eh?'
- k. *plenty*: quantifier, 'much, many'; adverb, 'very'
- (28) fiji gód, plándi víʒɪbal a
'Fiji's good, there are many vegetables, eh?'
- (29) plándi láuki
'(I) like it a lot.'
- (30) náɔlu blándi hót
'Nauru is very hot.'
- l. *savvy*: verb, 'know'
- (31) mí nó sábe dógdəŋ
'I don't know how to speak (English).'
- m. *stop*: locative verb, 'stay, live, be (in a place)'¹¹
- (32) mí hástəbən sɪdáb nálu, wók
'My husband is staying in Nauru, working.'
- n. *talk*: verb, 'talk, speak, say'
- (33) yú tók ólo, mí tók wátfo ólo?
'You said (I'm old. I said why old?'
- o. *too much*: adverb, 'very, very much'
- (34) tumáči mání gód, nó tumáči mání nóɡod
'(If you have) very much money, it's good; (if you don't have) very much money, it's bad.'
- p. *what for*: interrogative, 'why'

- (35) mí tók wátfo nó láuki
 'I said, "Why don't you like it?"'
- q. *finish*: completive aspect marker (postverbal in PPE and CPE, preverbal in Nauru)¹²
- (36) nó fíntši máli
 '(She's) not married.'
- (37) mí hásubən flén nó wáfu. fíntši dát tín yía
 'My husband's friend has no wife. (She) died ten years ago.'

In summary, the 17 common comparative features found in Nauru are:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| a. <i>all same</i> | i. <i>no good</i> |
| b. <i>catch</i> | j. <i>number one</i> |
| c. <i>got</i> | k. <i>plenty</i> |
| d. <i>how much</i> | l. <i>savvy</i> |
| e. <i>long time</i> | m. <i>stop</i> |
| f. <i>master</i> | n. <i>talk</i> |
| g. <i>moon</i> | o. <i>too much</i> |
| h. <i>no can</i> | p. <i>what for</i> |
| | q. <i>finish</i> |

The three shared features which are not found in the data and which most likely do not occur in PE in Nauru are:

- r. *by and by*: future tense marker¹³
- s. *he*: predicate marker (or resumptive *he*)
- t. *suppose*: conjunction, 'if'

3.4. Distinguishing features of Chinese PE and Pacific PE

There are several grammatical features which differentiate Chinese PE and Pacific PE: the pronoun systems and possessive constructions, both already mentioned, and past tense marking. This section discusses these differences in detail and describes the corresponding features of PE in Nauru:

a. pronoun system:

Pacific PE has a complex pronoun system with singular and plural subject forms (and dual and trial in most varieties) for all three persons, and also distinct inclusive and exclusive first person plural forms. In contrast, Chinese PE is said to have only three subject pronouns. The system in PE in Nauru is the same as that of Chinese PE.¹⁴ On the other hand, the actual forms of the pronouns in Nauru are generally the same as the singular subject pronouns in Pacific PE: *me*, *you*, and *him* (usually realized as [hem] or

[ɛm] in Pacific PE but as [hɪm] in Nauru). In contrast, the pronouns in Chinese PE are *my*, *you*, and *he*, although *I* and *me* are also sometimes found for the first person.¹⁵

b. possessive constructions:

Neither Pacific PE nor Chinese PE has special possessive pronominal forms. Pacific PE shows possession by using *belong* with the possessed entity coming initially, for example, in Bislama: *haos blong mi* 'my house'. Chinese PE shows possession by juxtaposing the possessor and the possessed, with the possessor coming first. As mentioned above, PE in Nauru generally has the same construction as Chinese PE, for example, [mi haosi] 'my house' (but see section 3.7).

c. past (or anterior) tense marking:

Pacific PE uses *been* as a preverbal past or anterior tense marker, while Chinese PE uses *have*. Neither of these occurs in the Nauru data and, in fact, there is no occurrence of any past or anterior tense marking.

In addition to these grammatical differences between Chinese PE and Pacific PE, there are certain morphological and lexical differences. One of these has to do with the form of the preverbal potential marker (positive). In Chinese PE, it is *can*, whereas in current Pacific PE, it has several forms. For example, in Bislama it is *savvy* (*save*) and in Tok Pisin it is *can* (*ken*) for permission constructions and *enough* (*inap*) for ability. In Nauru, the Chinese PE form *can do* (see d. in section 3.1 above) is used for this function:

- (38) mɪ kændu gó
'Can I go?'

Some of the lexical differences between Chinese PE and Pacific PE, and the corresponding forms in Nauru, are as follows:

Chinese PE	Pacific PE	meaning	form in Nauru
<i>chowchow</i>	<i>kaikai</i>	'food'	<i>kaikai</i>
<i>chopchop</i>	<i>quick time</i>	'quickly'	<i>quick time</i>
<i>look see</i>	<i>look (him)</i>	'see'	<i>look see</i>
<i>what thing</i>	<i>what name</i>	'what'	<i>what</i>
<i>pay</i>	<i>give (him)</i>	'give'	<i>cumshaw</i>
<i>have got</i>	<i>got</i>	'there is' (existential)	[yao]

The term *cumshaw* is found in Chinese PE, but is usually used as a noun meaning 'gift' or 'bribe' (Baker 1987:184). The last form appears to be unique in the Nauru Pidgin and is discussed in section 3.6. below.

3.5. Absent features

In addition to the features already mentioned, the following salient features of Chinese PE are absent in the data:

- a. the use of *belong* as a copula;
- b. the suffix *fashion* 'in . . . manner', added to adjectives and some adverbs; and
- c. certain lexical items:

<i>chop</i>	'letter, seal'
<i>joss</i>	'god, religion'
[wónçi]	'want'
[bóbəli]	'trouble, uproar'
[máski]	'never mind'

Two CPE suffixes occur in the Nauru data but appear to be fused as part of some lexical items and are not productive. The locative suffix *side* appears predictably in the following words:

- (39)

aósaíd	}	'outside, the other side, elsewhere'
ólósaíd		
béksaíd		

But it is not added to nouns or pronouns to show location as in Chinese PE; so, for example, *[haóssaíd] 'at the house' does not occur. Similarly, the temporal suffix *time* occurs as part of these items (which could conceivably have come directly from English):

- (40)

náuttaim	'at night'
lón̄taim	'for a long time, frequently'
sémtaím	'some time'

But it does not occur elsewhere and the Chinese PE [bifótaím] 'before, in the past' occurs as [bifó] in Nauru.

In addition to those already mentioned, the following salient features of Pacific PE are absent in Nauru:

- a. *along* used as a preposition;
- b. *where* as a relative clause marker;

- c. *all* as a plural marker; and
- d. certain lexical items:
 - piccaninny* 'child'
 - bullamacow* 'bull, cow'

Two Pacific PE suffixes occur in the data as well, but are not as productive as in Pacific PE. The first is the transitive suffix *[-ɛm]* (or *[-um]*). It occurs only a few times in the data and appears fused with the verb, since it is used in both transitive and intransitive constructions; for example:

- (41) a. *húm sūtíləm nó péi*
 'He stole (it), didn't pay.'
- b. *nó čáinis sūtíləm*
 'No Chinese people steal.'

The other suffix is *fellow*, mentioned above, which attached to various adjectives. In the data, it is used only with the following: *[gɔd]* 'good', *[big]* 'big', and *[plandi]* 'many'. However, unlike the other suffixes just described, it does not occur consistently with these items and is, therefore, not fused.

3.6. Unique lexical features

The following lexical features, found in the recorded speech of more than one speaker or reported by informants, are unique to the PE of Nauru compared to Chinese PE and Pacific PE:

- a. items derived from Cantonese (with sources):
- | | | |
|-----|---------|---|
| 有 | yáo | 'there is (existential), have' |
| 無 | mo | 'none, nothing'
(and negative existential) |
| 少少 | síusiu | 'a little, a few' |
| 省牛王 | sáŋawɔŋ | 'useless, lazy' |

Some examples are:

- (42) *yáo síusiu gó ɔmélika*
 There are a few who go to America.'
- (43) *yáo šóp kám yáo, mó šóp kám mó*
 'If there's a ship, then there are (vegetables);
 if there's no ship, then there aren't any.'
- (44) *sáŋawɔŋ láuki sulíp*
 '(They're) lazy, just like to sleep.'

- b. items derived from Kiribati (with sources):

lájilaŋi	‘crazy’	<i>rangirang</i>
kólokolo	‘get credit’	<i>koro-</i> ‘write’
kéa	‘none, nothing’	<i>akea</i>
tékumoa	‘thief’	<i>tekimoa</i>
neigo	‘Kiribati girl’	<i>neiko</i> ‘vocative form for female’
- c. items from Nauruan

gadúdu	‘child’	(from <i>kadudu</i> ‘small’)
kúmo	‘pig, pork’	
- d. items from English:

fəʔɔ(f)	‘leave the country, get repatriated’ (from <i>fuck off</i>)
kuls	‘clothes’
áidonoo	‘I don’t know’
pæket	‘pocket’
aísfud	‘frozen food’
wa(t)	‘what’
- e. items of unknown origin:

bú(l)bu(l)	‘white man’
sadúi	‘die’

3.7. Variation

All the features of PE described above are found in the recordings of two or more speakers. But there is also some variation among speakers which I will mention here.

First, Speaker 1 differs from the others in three important areas:

- a. *stay* instead of *stop*;
- b. *my* in possessive constructions instead of *me*:

(45) mái sán sítéi mélbon
 ‘My son lives in Melbourne.’

- c. *for* as a preposition:

(46) kók fó hásubən
 ‘(I) cook for (my) husband.’

Second, Speaker 4 is the only one who uses *belong* (14 times). Rather than a copula (as in Chinese PE) or a possessive marker (as in Pacific PE), it most often appears to be a focus marker:

- (47) *bifó nó wómən ənli bəlɔŋ mí*
 'Before there were no women, only me.'
 (48) *bəlɔŋ mí mí tók ɔlsem nó máta*
 'As for me, I said it doesn't matter.'

However, there are three instances in which *belong* seems to be part of a possessive construction, *belong*- possessor-possessioned:

- (49) *bəlɔŋ mí hásɪbən stáp híl wókɪŋ*
 'My husband works here.'
 (50) *bəlɔŋ mí fæmli* (occurs twice)
 'my family'

Informants are also familiar with this type of construction (see Appendix A).

Third, Speaker 5 uses some forms derived from English and some from Cantonese which are not used by other speakers, but known by informants:

<i>déidei</i>	'every day, always'	
<i>sómsəm</i>	'like, the same as'	
<i>nəmbalási</i>	'last'	
<i>jo</i>	'become'	佢
<i>mao</i>	'old lady'	婆
<i>yuu</i>	'demand, want'	要

4. *Pidgin Mixing*

Section 2 presented documentary evidence that two separate varieties of PE were spoken on Nauru: Chinese PE and Pacific PE. Section 3 presented some linguistic evidence that the two varieties have been in contact, the most obvious being the presence of some of the mutually exclusive features of Chinese PE and Pacific PE in the PE spoken in Nauru today. This section discusses in more detail the linguistic results of contact between pidgins in Nauru and elsewhere.

4.1. *Koineization*

Mühlhäusler (1985a) uses the term "mixing" to refer to the linguistic consequences of language contact. He also distinguishes between mixing resulting from contact between separate linguistic systems (i.e., distinct languages), and from contact between related linguistic subsystems, such as regional dialects.¹⁶ Pidgins that share the same lexifier language can also be

considered linguistic subsystems because they are very similar not only lexically but also structurally, due to "universal tendencies in pidgin elaboration." However, Mühlhäusler suggests that the results of contact between pidgins, which are developing systems, are "strikingly different" from the results of contact between regional dialects, which are already developed. He claims, for example, that contact between pidgins (such as between Pacific and Aboriginal Pidgins in the Torres Strait) leads to an increase in variability and instability, whereas contact between regional varieties (such as between German dialects transplanted to Namibia) leads to leveling of surface differences.

The characteristics of Pidgin English in Nauru, however, seem to point to linguistic results very similar to those described in several recent studies on contact between transplanted regional dialects (Gambhir 1981; Siegel 1986, 1987; Trudgill 1986; Barz & Siegel 1988). In these works, the term "koinization" is used to refer to the process which brings about linguistic change in subsystems in contact that may result in the emergence of a new compromise variety, called a "koiné" (Siegel 1985). Koinization may begin when individuals try to reduce linguistic differences by avoiding a distinctive feature of their own dialect and modifying or accommodating their speech to be similar to another dialect. This accommodation may eventually be so widespread that it becomes socially accepted and a permanent feature of the first dialect. According to Trudgill (1986:127), koinization is a cover term for three component processes: mixing of features, leveling of differences, and simplification.

In addition to the evidence of mixing of features of Chinese PE and Pacific PE in Nauru (shown in sections 3.1 and 3.2), the data indicates there has been some leveling of differences. Trudgill (1986:98–102) defines leveling as the "reduction or attrition of *marked* variants," and suggests that the most common variants have the best chance for survival. Section 3.3 above shows that 17 out of 20 (or 85 percent) of the features common to Chinese PE and Pacific PE have survived in Nauru. Where Chinese PE and Pacific PE differ, as shown in section 3.4, in no case do both the Chinese PE feature and the Pacific PE feature appear in the Nauru data. Instead, one of the two appears, neither appears, or a new form appears. Thus, according to the data, as a result of contact between Chinese PE and Pacific PE in Nauru, there was an eventual leveling of differences rather than an increase in variability.¹⁷

The result of "simplification" (here a cover term for both simplification

and impoverishment as defined by Mühlhäusler 1980:21) is that the variety which emerges from contact between different varieties is formally less complex than any of these varieties in certain areas of phonology, morphology, syntax, or lexicon. This comparative lack of complexity may be evident, for example, in a smaller lexicon, reduced morphology, increased regularity, or decreased markedness. The evidence of possible simplification in Nauru is found in sections 3.3 and 3.4. First, it seems significant that of the 20 features shared by Chinese PE and Pacific PE, the three which are not found in the Nauru data are all grammatical markers (of future tense, of the predicate, and of the protactic clause in conditional sentences). Similarly, both Chinese PE and Pacific PE have a past tense marker, but neither occurs in the data. Second, suffixes found in Chinese PE (*fashion*, *side*, and *time*) and in Pacific PE (the transitive suffix) either are not found in the data or are nonproductive, as they are fused with the stem as a lexical item. Third, there are generally no prepositions and no plural marking in the data. Finally, the lexical distinction between 'like' and 'want', found in Chinese PE and most varieties of Pacific PE does not exist.

4.2. Intermediate forms and reallocation

Koineization may also lead to the emergence of intermediate forms, that is, compromise forms not found in any of the contributing varieties (Trudgill 1986:62–3). As with the results of the other three processes, intermediate forms may initially arise among individuals, in this case as the result of imperfect accommodation, but later they may become socially accepted features. One possible example in the Nauru data is *what*, which is intermediate to Chinese PE *what thing* and Pacific PE *what name*.¹⁸

Another result of koineization is that certain features which are not eliminated in leveling or simplification may be "reallocated" to a new function (Trudgill 1986:110). Speaker 4's use of *belong* as a focus marker may be an example of this kind of reallocation. Speaker 4 has been on Nauru 23 years and her speech may reflect an earlier usage which has now virtually disappeared. But it may also be an example of individual imperfect accommodation at an earlier period when both the Chinese PE and Pacific PE *belong* were in use.

4.3. Continuous pidginization

Other data presented in sections 3.6 and 3.7 seems to show that some "repidginization" has also been taking place in Nauru. This occurred when newcomers to Nauru who were not familiar with either Chinese PE or

Pacific PE had to learn quickly the pidgin established on the island. This pidginization of an existing pidgin may also account for some of the simplification noted above, but the main evidence is the occurrence of lexical items from the three most important substrate languages: Cantonese, Nauruan, and Kiribati. Also, the innovations derived from English indicate some contact with the superstrate language. In addition, the variation among speakers (as shown in section 3.7) may indicate that pidginization of both English and the established Nauru Pidgin is still going on.

4.4. A parallel example of pidgin mixing

Similar contact between Chinese PE and another variety of PE took place in Australia, as described in detail by Harris (1986). In the early 1870s, Chinese began going to the area which is now the Northern Territory, where Northern Territory PE was already in existence. These Chinese, like those who went to Nauru, were almost all from around Canton in southern China (Harris 1986:172), and therefore most likely were familiar with Chinese PE. And, as in Nauru, the Chinese at first greatly outnumbered the Europeans; by 1888, there were 6,122 Chinese and 1,411 Europeans (172).

To illustrate that Chinese PE was actually spoken by Chinese in the Northern Territory PE, Harris gives many quotations from contemporary sources, such as the following example (178) from Searcy (1912):

- (51) You makee write chit along steamer, wharfy go look see one piecee blanket all samee from flend.

Characteristic Chinese PE items, such as *look-see* and *joss* 'god, religion' are also mentioned as being used by the Chinese. Furthermore, referring to observations by Sowden (1882), Harris notes (176–7) that Chinese PE was used for communication between Europeans and Chinese, and gives the following example spoken by a European:

- (52) You welly good fellow, me likum you.

This example illustrates the use of phonemic features of Chinese PE (in *welly*), but also grammatical features of Northern Territory PE, such as the transitive suffix in *likum* (as opposed to Chinese PE *likee*).

In addition, Harris shows that there were significant contacts between speakers of Chinese PE and Northern Territory PE, and describes situations in which he concludes (181), "it is difficult to imagine that there would have been no interaction between the two pidgins." Thus it is likely

that, as in Nauru, some pidgin mixing may have taken place. Some examples given by Harris support this point of view. First, there are quotations from Gunn (1908) of Chinese speaking PE with features of Northern Territory PE, such as *sit down* 'live, stay', *all about* 'they', and *blackfellow* 'Aboriginee' (295), and the following from Searcy (1912) with the Northern Territory PE feature *lubra* 'woman' (335):

(53) You catchem whitefella lubra . . .

Second, the third person pronoun *him*, rather than the more common Chinese PE *he*, is found in all quotations given by Harris of Chinese speaking PE.

With regard to the pidgin spoken by Aborigines, some quotations listed by Harris from the 1880s and 1890s show a possessive construction like that of Chinese PE, with the possessor preceding the possessed and without *belong*. Here are some examples:

(54) . . . Debbil-debbil . . . him you friend? (329)

(55) Him lubra havem *bun-ngilla* (girl) (330)

Also there is one quotation (296) in which an Aborigine uses *pickaninny* as an adjective 'small' as attested in Chinese PE (but see note 8):

(56) Two fella proas been come piccaninny daylight.

The expression *piccaninny daylight*, meaning 'early dawn', is found in current Australian English. Its origins are not clear and it may be that, like the Australian English term *walkabout*, it originated from PE.

Finally, a quotation from a European court official at Darwin (291) shows concurrent use of the Northern Territory PE numeral marker *fella* and the Chinese PE numeral marker *piecee*:

(57) Him big fella man say by-em-by plenty fella policeman takem one piecee blackfella along bush long way then one white fella white man putem rope alonga blackfella's neck . . .

Harris (297) suggests: "It would seem likely that this variable use of alternate forms may have characterised the pidgin for many years . . ." But eventually leveling occurred and one alternative became the socially accepted norm.

Similar variability may also have been present in the early stages of koineization in Nauru. But while many exclusively Chinese PE features have been retained in Nauru, none have been retained in Northern Territory PE. (Of course, like the PE in Nauru, Northern Territory PE shares

many features with Chinese PE which may have been reinforced by contact.) Harris's initial hypothesis (296) is that Chinese PE did not have a great influence on Northern Territory PE because the Chinese were not present during the critical early years of development. But later (297–8) he explains that the majority of the Chinese had left the Northern Territory by the beginning of this century, before leveling had been completed. Chinese speakers were then a small minority; thus, marked Chinese PE features were the ones which were leveled out. In Nauru, however, Chinese have been the largest ethnic group since the beginning of the century, and newcomers fresh from China arrive every year.

5. *Some Questions and Conclusions*

Is the PE spoken in Nauru a newly discovered pidgin language, distinct from both Chinese PE and Pacific PE, or is it merely a variant of one of these, heavily influenced by the other? Rather than answer this question, the information presented here highlights many of the difficulties pointed out by Mühlhäusler (1985b, 1986) of both identifying separate pidgins and determining their genetic affiliation.

First of all, the traditional examination of lexicostatistics, comparative structure, and mutual intelligibility is not useful in establishing whether or not PE in Nauru is distinct enough from Chinese PE and Pacific PE to be considered a separate variety. This is because, as mentioned above, all three share the same lexifier language and also some universal features of pidgin languages. As for mutual intelligibility, it was tested to some extent at a recent regional course held in Tonga. A Kiribati speaker who has lived in Nauru for five years and knows the local PE could understand Pacific PE speakers from the Solomons but not from Vanuatu, even though Pijin and Bislama are mutually intelligible.¹⁹ Also, Bislama speakers I tested in Vanuatu had difficulty understanding the Nauru recordings of Chinese speakers. Thus, as pointed out by Mühlhäusler (1985b:46), it may be accent, rather than lexical and structural features, that affects intelligibility.

Second, it is equally difficult to determine whether PE in Nauru is more closely related to Chinese PE or to Pacific PE. This preliminary study supports the conclusions of Clark (1979) and Mühlhäusler (1985a, 1985b, 1986) that traditional family tree models with genetic subgroupings are not useful for pidgin languages. This is not so much because of the inadequacy of the traditional comparative method as because of discontinuity and mixing.

Even if we could determine that PE in Nauru was Chinese PE affected by Pacific PE, or Pacific PE affected by Chinese PE, there would still be the problem of deciding what to call it. According to the usually accepted naming practice of "*location* Pidgin *lexifier language*," we could not call a pidgin spoken in Nauru "Chinese" or "Melanesian"; and "Pacific" is too general. Also, some people have begun to interpret the "Chinese" part of the term "Chinese Pidgin English" as meaning "spoken by Chinese" (Mühlhäusler 1985b:26). So, even if we could determine that the PE in Nauru is a distinct variety, calling it "Nauruan" would also be problematic since this would imply to some people that the main speakers are Nauruans.

Other important questions need to be answered before deciding whether the PE in Nauru is a separate variety. These questions have to do with the current state of Chinese PE. First, does it still exist, or is it actually extinct as some have claimed? If we knew the answer to this question, then we would know whether new Chinese coming to Nauru already know some pidgin language or not. And if Chinese PE does still exist, what are its features? After all the contact with varieties of PE in Australia and the Pacific, it would be hard to imagine that it too has not undergone some changes. It is surprising that the most recent data we have on Chinese PE is more than 30 years old and is based on Chinese PE spoken by non-Chinese. The other data we have is from 75 and 100 years ago. It seems that, considering the interest in the relationship between Chinese PE and other pidgins, research into the current state of Chinese PE should be given high priority.

This report has left many questions unanswered; nevertheless, it has reinforced Mühlhäusler's observations that mixing of pidgin languages has been significant in the Pacific. It has also shown that mixing between pidgins may be more similar than previously thought to mixing between other related linguistic subsystems.

NOTES

I am indebted to France Mugler for her help in the research for this article. An earlier version of the article was presented at the Fifth International Conference on Austronesian Linguistics, Auckland, New Zealand, January 1988. I would like to thank France Mugler, Terry Crowley, Diana Eades, and three anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on various drafts, and Ross Clark, Philip Baker, and Sue Holzknecht for providing important background information.

1) Investigating whether other pidginized forms of English are still spoken on Nauru was beyond the scope of this study.

2) The term *Pacific Pidgin English* is actually a convenient umbrella for the many topologically similar varieties of the region, all distinct from Chinese PE. However, for purposes of discussion in this study, Pacific PE is treated as a single variety.

3) Dr. Mugler spoke in standard English and the field assistant in standard English and Cantonese. The informants switched between PE and Cantonese. Note that for political reasons, informants were reluctant to be tape recorded. Those who agreed were promised that their names and personal details (such as about how long they had been in Nauru) would be treated in strictest confidence.

4) Note [š]=[f], [č]=[tʃ], [j]=[dʒ], [y]=[j]; [aɪ], [aɔ], [eɪ], and [ɪu] are diphthongs; [ˈ] indicates primary stress.

5) Some linguists argue that the nature of the data makes it appear that there are only three pronouns and that the plural forms, *we* and *dey*, also occur in Chinese PE.

6) There is a similar feature in Solomons Islands Pijin, but in Chinese PE it appears to be rule-governed, [o] or [u] following [f] or [l], and [i] elsewhere.

7) This word may have come via the Kiribati language, i.e., *karabuti* 'jail' (see Cowell 1951:EV13). It also may be additional evidence that people from Kiribati were familiar with PE. [Note that *calaboose* is much more widespread; it is used in the American Southwest, for example — ed.]

8) Franklin (1979:48) lists *piccaninny* as a feature of Chinese PE which "has been in use for a long time," but Baker (1987:177) says that it is attested only once (in 1747).

9) This item is rare in the recordings; instead, either the Cantonese-derived [yaɔ] is used, as in example 12, or Ø, as in the following:

mí nó gadúdu
'I don't have children.'

10) In current varieties of Pacific PE, this is found only in Tok Pisin, where it is used to indicate permission or volition, rather than ability.

11) Baker (1987:200n) states that he has excluded *stop* from his list because of a lack of examples in Chinese PE with the precise meaning 'be (in place)'. Hall (1944:103–4) presents several examples in which the meaning of *stop* may be clearly interpreted as 'stay', but he also gives the following: (transcription is changed to the style used in this article, but the glosses are Hall's):

mát stáp yúsaid 'I am at your house.'
yú stáp ðíssaid háo lón 'How long will you (or: have you been) here?'

12) This feature is listed by Franklin (1979:43) as being characteristic of both Chinese PE and Pacific PE. Some examples in Chinese PE can be found in Hall (1944).

13) Some informants say that they recognize this feature, but it does not occur in the recordings.

14) According to Hall (1944:98), Chinese PE has a pronominal verbal suffix [mi] 'to me', but there is no evidence that this occurs in Nauru.

15) Here I am referring to Chinese PE as found in later texts, after 1876. See Baker (1987:165–71) for a detailed analysis of Chinese PE pronouns.

16) Here, linguistic subsystems mean typologically similar language varieties which are either mutually intelligible or share the same genetically related superposed language, such as a regional standard or literary language (see Siegel 1985:365).

17) In fact, some of the variability in Chinese PE, such as in the different pronoun forms (Baker 1987), also appears to be leveled out in Nauru.

18) Of course, this example may also be a result of contact with standard English.

19) Thanks to Terry Crowley for providing this information.

APPENDIX A: LANGUAGE USE

The following is an extract from an essay on language use written by a Tuvaluan student from Nauru for a University of the South Pacific sociolinguistics course in 1988 (sent to me by Terry Crowley).

English is the language I learnt at school. It is the language that I use to communicate with to other people who speak different vernaculars . . . Chinese Pidgin English is the language I use when shopping at the Chinese shopping centre where situations are created at such — “Hello friend! How much other one blue pants same same belong school ‘katutu’ catholic school what for no ‘kamso’ price come down mi likey ‘kolokolo’ what for you no ‘kamso’ me?” (What’s the cost of the blue school uniform pants worn by the catholic school children that I would like to take home now and pay later and why don’t you reduce the price because I am your friend?) . . .

When talking to complete strangers, English is always used first as a pre-test of other speakers’ knowledge of language (for the purpose of wishing to begin friendly conversation). If the other speaker’s ability to speak English is understandable, then the conversation continues, otherwise a switch to Chinese Pidgin English is the other alternative means of achieving successful social conversations.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE TEXT

This text has been abstracted from the tape recorded interview with Speaker 5. Questions in standard English (from the researcher) and explanations and conversation in Cantonese (from the field assistant and the speaker) have been deleted.

mí hasibən pápa pápa wók əmélíka súksi ó yía ... fínisum wók gó
hónkəŋ ... yáo nán súks yía ... plándi sitwəŋ, bígəla ... əmélíka fínisi
wók gó hónkəŋ ... nó wók, gadúdu wáifu kók káikəi ...

mí tóktək mí hasibən pápa pápa déidei káikəi á, ít á, pód soga pód ɔl
wén sumól pléd stáp ... láisi, wén láisi, wén soga, ɔl, tóktək plándi
gód, á ... áfda tú mún náittaum ó déidei yú yáo ...

mí fínúsi wók deə gó hǫŋkəŋ. gó hǫŋkəŋ, gó baʔgeŋ. yú fínúsi gó baʔgeŋ
... hǫŋkəŋ ... nó, ó yú gó ... plándi gód [Interviewer: plánti mēni] nó,
siusu mēni ... yú sábe nó, fáiv dála hǫŋkəŋ mēni á sǝmsǝm nálu mēni
wén dála ... gód ... adıŋ fíŋi mēni wén dála sǝmsǝm hǫŋkəŋ mēni eit
dála. ó yú gó hǫŋkəŋ ...

fíŋi plándi gód á ... mí kǝn du gó mó ...

yú hámač gadúdu [Field assistant: nó fínúsi mēli] nó mēli gód á ... mí
fó, deə ónli nǝmbalási gǝlo ... plándi fǝt á, mí dǝta nǝmbalási mí wén
gǝlo, bígfǝla ... wén bóı dli gǝlo ... dli stáŋ hǫŋkəŋ baʔgeŋ guoŋtuŋ, ónli
wén nǝmbalási smól, smól kǝm bǝk hía ...

fíŋi gód, plándi víŋibal á, plándi čikǝn á, plándi mít ... plándi gód ...
plándi čikǝn bífu kúmo á ... mí láiki gó ... ǝlǝgita fíŋi kǝm, kábıŋi
ǝlǝgita, plǝn kǝm bǝk, pǝpǝ kúmo ǝlǝgita fíŋi kǝm deə á. nó gód nálu
mó... yáo fíŋi nó kǝm á nálu nó kǝkai ... nó kǝn kǝkai ... slıp slıp
lǝksi tivı ... wǝta nó nálu á ... nó wǝta nó kǝn .. hía wǝta ǝstǝla sıp
kǝm á ...

yú haǝsi fíŋi, bígfǝla ... mí mí kǝmsǝ dǝta yú, sıkl ... mí kǝmsǝ mí
bíŋ dǝta yú á, sıkl ... nó máta, yáo páspǝ yáo páspǝ ...

mí gó baı víŋibal ... baı víŋibal kǝm bǝk ... plándi pipǝl sǝmsǝm stáŋ faı
á ... ǝlǝgita čǝnis ... ǝŋǝn kǝkai ısap, ǝlǝgita láiki plándi víŋibal, kǝkuy
kǝkuy, nó mó, siusu á, ǝlǝgita nó kǝn baı, siusu siusu siusu ...
sǝmsǝm faı faı á ... plándi tǝktǝk á ... wén mǝn wén písi ... nó plándi ...

másuta plándi gód tım ʃun ... plándi pipǝl á, stáŋ aıwo otél á, fínúsi
slıp pǝi mēni tǝktǝk nó mēni ... nó mēni kǝkai, it á, tǝk kǝm bǝk ...
mǝo, sóri á ... ǝlǝ flǝn nó mo mēni ... yú kǝmsǝ siusu kǝkai ei, tǝktǝk
wa kǝk kǝmsǝ kǝkai, fínúsi kǝkai nó pǝi ... plándi gód, gód mǝn ... yú
nó láı okéı ... tım ʃun nó láiki laumǝn ... nó láı ǝlaıt okéı ...

mí nó sábe plándi mēni ó siusu ... yáo mēni óli plándi gadúdu ...
plándi gadúdu plándi mǝn wók wók wók hım pǝi mēni wók wók mǝn
... sitǝa adıŋ ... ǝlǝsaud á, čǝnis á, deə adıŋ tlı písi á, otél á, adıŋ tlı
písi otél ... nó tlı písi sitǝa ... wén otél á

My husband's grandfather worked in America for sixty years . . . After working there, he went to Hong Kong . . . He's ninety-six years old . . . very strong, big . . . After working in America he went to Hong Kong . . . Now he doesn't work . . . his son's wife cooks for him.

I said my husband's grandfather, every day when he eats eh, he puts sugar and oil on a small plate [as a sauce] with rice, one [mouthful of] rice, sugar, oil, he says it's very good eh . . . after two months at night oh he wanted to have it every day . . .

I finished work there and went to Hong Kong, went to Hong Kong, went to Peking. Have you been to Peking? Hong Kong? No, oh you go . . . It's very good. [Interviewer: Do you need a lot of money?] No, a little money . . . You know, five Hong Kong dollars is equal to one Nauru dollar . . . good . . . One Fiji dollar might be worth eight Hong Kong dollars. Oh, you go to Hong Kong . . .

Fiji is very good, eh? I can go, no?

How many children do you have? [Field assistant: She's not married.] Not being married is good, eh? I have four (children), only the last girl is there . . . very fat, eh? . . . my last daughter, my one girl is big now . . . one boy three girls . . . three are in Hong Kong, Peking, Canton, only one, the last, youngest came back here . . .

Fiji is good, plenty vegetables, eh, plenty chicken, eh, plenty meat . . . very good . . . plenty chicken, beef, pork, eh? . . . I want to go there . . . Everything comes from Fiji, cabbage and everything comes by plane, papaya, pork, everything comes from Fiji, eh? Nauru is no good, nothing . . . If things don't come from Fiji, there's no food in Nauru . . . You can't eat . . . just sleep and watch TV . . . There's no water in Nauru . . . no water, you can't do anything . . . water comes here by ship from Australia, eh . . .

Is your house in Fiji big? I'll give my daughter to you, for schooling . . . I'll give my big daughter to you, eh, for schooling . . . No worries, she has a passport, she has a passport . . .

I went to buy vegetables . . . I bought vegetables and returned . . . There were lots of people, it was like a fight, eh? . . . all the Chinese . . . they have food shops (canteens), they all want a lot of vegetables for cooking, cooking, but no more, just a little, eh? They all can't buy some, just a little, just a little . . . just like a fight, eh? . . . lots of arguing . . . only one bunch per person . . . not much . . .

The boss is very good, Tim Jun . . . Lots of people eh stay at the Aiwo Hotel eh and when they finish sleeping there and pay the bill, they say they have no money . . . no money for food, so the boss brings them here . . . (He says) "Old Lady, sorry, eh? This other friend here has no money. You give him a little food, eh? Ask him what to cook and give him the food. After eating he doesn't have to pay." . . . very good, good man . . . If you don't tell lies, OK . . . Tim Jun doesn't like liars . . . If you don't lie, it's all right, OK . . .

I don't know if he has a lot of money or just a little . . . He has money, only lots of children . . . lots of children, lots of workers, he has to pay the workers . . . maybe he has a store . . . on the other side of the island, eh, in Chinatown there maybe three, eh, hotels, eh, maybe three hotels . . . no, three stores . . . one hotel, eh?

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